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WRL News

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Women's Pentagon Action

Arriving at the parade grounds outside the Pentagon. *Photo by Dorothy Marder*

By Susan Pines

We are gathering at the Pentagon on November 17 because we fear for our lives. This is the opening sentence of the Unity Statement of the Women's Pentagon Action, a group which came together last summer to sponsor two days of protest in Washington, DC.

The Women's Pentagon Action grew out of the Women and Life on Earth Conference which took place last winter in New England. The concept was to relate our feminism and the growing awareness of the connections between militarism and the violence of our society towards women and other oppressed groups. It was an action by, and for, women.

More than 2,000 women gathered in Washington that weekend to mourn, and rage, and defy, and express their outrage at an escalating arms race, the devastation of our cities, the contamination of our countryside, and the violence that women face in their everyday lives—violence that is very directly related to a militaristic society.

On Sunday, November 16, we gathered at the Marie Reed Community Center to share information, skills and experiences. In the morning women were asked to attend workshops in areas where they have done very little work in order to learn about new issues and concerns. In the afternoon women went to workshops in areas where they have been very involved, Workshops were held in many areas, connecting feminism to ecology, racism, militarism, violence against women, reproductive freedom, poverty, sexual orientation and women and the arts. The day ended with a march and vigil through the community where the Gathering was held. The vigil was dedicated to Yolanda Ward, a black woman activist who worked in a rape-crisis center and was killed in Washington in late October. Her death expressed to us the links we were talking about, of the violence of the Pentagon and of the racism and violence in our streets.

Monday morning began with a silent march through Arlington Cemetery. The walk past rows and rows of tombstones symbolized the graveness of our message. As we approached the Pentagon we were joined by drummers and four immense, beautiful women puppets, made by the Bread and Puppet Theatre for the demonstration. Each puppet symbolized a different "stage" of our demonstration, black for mourning, red for anger, golden for empowerment and white for defiance.

The demonstration had been organized so as not to include a traditional rally with speakers, but to allow the participants to be fully involved in expressing our message. During the first phase of the demonstration we planted our own cemetery to commemorate the many women dead because of violence. As gravestones with inscriptions such as "Victims of Love Canal," Karen Silkwood, "women who were raped," etc., were planted, other women stood in silence, wailed or did what was appropriate for them to express their mourning. As the red "anger" puppet walked into the center of the parade ground, a loud shout went up and women broke their mourning circle, crowded together and chanted, yelled, banged on cans, and generally let their fury be known. The gold and white puppets then led us out of the parade grounds and around the Pentagon. As the two puppets met, a feeling of excitement and empowerment was passed around the circle as we realized that we had encircled the whole Pentagon.

At this point, women who were prepared to do civil disobedience broke out of the circle. This was the defiance stage of the action. Some women sat in at the doors of the Pentagon, others wove the entrances shut with string. On the sides where women were weaving the doors shut a banner was displayed which read, "We will weave a world web to entangle the powers that bury our children."

The police slowly started clearing two of the three entrances by arresting women who blocked them. Although the Mall entrance was blocked, no arrests were made there at all. During the arrests, women who were not participating in the CD went back to the parade grounds for a speak-out and a reading on women's herstory, until the rain and sleet dispersed most of the crowd.

The arrested women were processed at the Pentagon and then loaded onto buses and taken to magistrate's court. During processing, names were checked against a file of people arrested at the Coalition for a Non-Nuclear World demonstration last April 28. At that point it became obvious that those women who had been arrested before would probably be given stiffer sentences, but it wasn't until later that evening, when the sentencing began, that we realized

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DOROTHY DAY 1897-1980

Photo by Karl Bissinger

Dorothy Day

By David McReynolds

On November 29th, Dorothy Day died at Maryhouse, the Catholic worker settlement where she lived. On December 1st, I went over for the wake to pay my respects to the dead and share my loss with the living. Dorothy's coffin was of the plainest wood, a box newly hammered together and open for viewing. The coffin rested on a simple table beneath a wooden cross made of two sticks. Dorothy Day's face in death was tired, old and rested.

For those of us who are not Catholics, her life and death has a different meaning certainly than for those within the Catholic Church.

It would be very wrong for non-Christians to take from Dorothy Day this essential part of her life and work—her absolute seriousness about her Catholic faith. But it is also possible to accept the impact of Dorothy Day on our lives even if we cannot embrace all of her beliefs. I know that I met her only a very few times, yet she "called me to witness" against Civil Defense drills by her persistence in being arrested.

She was political only incidentally—but she *was* political. At a time when the Catholic Church was almost totally reactionary, the Catholic Worker spoke out for pacifism—and for a radical anarchism. For Dorothy Day the issue was never to ask what was politically possible, or politically expedient, but to ask what was needed in the eyes of God. And if that existential act did not solve the problems, that, too, must be left to God. The small things were all we could control. Whether to take shelter when the air raid drills sounded. The larger things quite possibly could never be dealth with. How, Dorothy Day asked, were we to live out our lives in the small things?

Often I have thought that the path to sainthood is so simple. All one must do is to lift up the body of the drunk, wet with vomit and urine, and cleanse that man, give him food, and put him to bed in your apartment. Not once in your life, as a test, but every day. Because each drunk, each "derelict", *is* Christ. Or—to put it in secular terms—is our sister, our brother. That is all. So simple. So impossible. We are all—except for a few, such as Dorothy—too busy with the important work of the world to stop and be a good Samaritan. Dorothy played that role every day. You see how simple, how easy it is to be a saint?

Only one thing more is required. One must do this without judging those who do not. One must accept poverty not as a burden but willingly. So, you see, all that Dorothy Day did—so simple a thing!—was to practice what we have heard preached. To make of her own life a revolution. A small thing. The hardest job of all. Always she acted without judging those of us who stood outside the Church. In the darkest days of the Cold War and McCarthy, I remember how few were the groups that one could count on to sponsor a demonstration, that spoke truth to the monstrous powers: War Resisters League, the Socialist Party, the Libertarian League (quietly headed by the late Russell Blackwell—a secular saint, veteran of the Spanish Civil War, a gentle and militant anarchist), and the Catholic Worker. Always the Catholic Worker. Always Dorothy Day. When almost all were silent she would speak. It was God's business to handle the rent bill and the food bill. It was Dorothy's business to speak truth and try to live the Gospel.

I am told Cardinal Cooke himself, corrupt in his power and compromise, felt obliged to attend her funeral. Even in death the Church Fathers found it expedient to stay on her good graces. I suspect the Cardinal reasoned that there *might* be a God, and *if* there were, the Cardinal might need Dorothy to put in a good word for him. And I know she would. She loved sinners. She will—if there is a God—put in a good word for us all. Much more important to me, during her life she put in the good word when most of the world around her chose silence.

Local Organizing

Monmouth County WRL

The Monmouth County War Resisters League participated in a peace action at the New Jersey Education Associations Teachers' Convention in Atlantic City, NJ on Thursday, November 13. Over 9,000 leaflets were personally distributed to educators who attended the convention. Two different leaflets were distributed. One included a quote by Eugene Debs, "I would no more teach children military training than teach them arson, robbery, or assassination." The other leaflet read, "It will be a fine day when our day care centers have all the money they need and the Navy has to hold a bake sale in order to buy a battleship." Both leaflets contained local contact information.

The weather cooperated. Temperature was in the low 70's as almost all of the 9,000 teachers read and assimilated our message. Very few negative comments or adverse reactions were noted.

One individual expressed a keen interest in starting a local Atlantic City chapter of WRL. For more information contact Monmouth County WRL, P.O. Box 131, Fair Haven, NJ 07701 (201)-899-4383).

New Locals

We're happy to welcome two new locals into WRL. They are:

Atlanta WRL, 1225 Cameron Court NE, Atlanta, GA 30306.

New Paltz WRL, 64 Forest Glen Rd., New Paltz, NY 12561 (914-255-8627).

Please note the following address changes:

Lamoille Peace Coalition/WRL, c/o Sophie Sollberger, Johnson State College, Johnson, VT 05656 (802-635-7349).

St. Louis WRL, 962 Warder, St. Louis, Mo 63130 (314-726-4662).

A Spring Tour of the Midwest

The more conservative administration in Washington and the generally rightward swing in national politics in the fall elections has created much despair in radical and liberal circles. Whether there are more creative and positive ways of viewing this rightward turn will be at the heart of Igal Roodenko's spring tour.

Here is the tentative schedule:

Feb. 1-15 — southward to Alabama and Louisiana
Feb. 16-28 — Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas
Mar. 1-15 — Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri
Mar. 16-31 — Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa
Apr. 1-15 — Illinois, Indiana
Apr. 16-30 — Wisconsin, Minnesota
May 1-15 — Ohio, Michigan

The schedule is open to considerable change. Those interested in bringing him to their college, high school, church or community group should contact him at the national office. Inquiries after the tour is under way will be handled by Merriel Fish.

Reflections on Organizing Against Right-Wing Violence

By Dannia Southerland

In early December, I attended a conference in Greensboro, North Carolina. The conference was held in a shabby and too small basement disco, where about 300 people from extraordinarily different perspectives on the same problem—what do we do about the rise of right-wing violence, both from the fringe hategroups and the more organized "legitimate" right—had gathered. We met in the disco because it was the only place, in a "progressive" southern town, that would house the conference at the last minute. A simplistic explanation will suffice: CWP (Communist Workers Party), a sectarian left group extremely visible in our area and the group attacked by a caravan of Klansmen and Nazis last year, when five people were killed, was part of the conference. Every place contacted, from another disco to a local university to the liberal Catholic Church, when they learned that CWP was part of the conference, refused their space. The combined efforts of the FBI, the Human Relations Commission, the city fathers and a general "red scare" has succeeded in severely, and frighteningly, isolating the CWP. For those of us who have our own problems working with them, this was a sobering reminder of who sits on which side of the fence.

The contradictions of sitting in that disco were accentuated by the variety and disparity of the people at the conference. Every major sectarian group that I know of was there, and then there were us odd balls—pacifists, lesbians and gay men, feminists, et al. Conspicuously absent were such groups as SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) and other more "traditional" civil rights groups. They are part of a separate coalition, the Anti-Klan Network, and will be conducting a major conference in late January. The reason for these very separate groupings has something to do with differences of style, more to do with differences of ideology, and a lot to do with the divisiveness that exists on the left.

I could get bogged down by a lengthy discussion of the splits and disagreements among groups working against right-wing violence. I don't want to belittle the problem, but want to approach the problem by talking about the position WRL-Southeast finds itself in, trying to work in coalitions.

Dannia Southerland is on the staff of the War Resisters League Southeast.

When five anti-Klan demonstrators were openly murdered, in broad daylight, in a Black southern neighborhood on November 3, 1979, time seemed to reel backwards. "How could such a thing happen," was the naive but nonetheless pressing question we kept asking each other. When, almost exactly a year later, an all-white jury pronounced the seven self-proclaimed Klansmen and Nazis not guilty, that question paled beside "what are we going to do to stop *all* this."

In our community, Durham, NC—which is just down the road from Greensboro, one way, and just down the road from the national headquarters for the American Nazi Party the other way—the question of what to do looms especially poignant and convoluted. The five anti-Klan demonstrators that were murdered, as well as their family and friends, are part of this community. Because of this, CWP is a central part of this issue. The question of whether or not to work with CWP has been part of every meeting concerning right-wing violence, whether or not they have been there soliciting attention. The fundamental differences between us are around armed vs. nonviolent revolution, which usually manifests in differences about tactics, or image, or often just violent rhetoric. Much energy has been diverted to talking about our disagreements, instead of talking about what to do.

The problems of working with extremely diverse, and divergent, groups is not specific to Durham WRL. But the organizing goes on. In looking for something to do, some positive way to build up and out of this mire of violent rightism, communities have run the gamut from traditional tactics to creative new methods. For instance:

—MARK, a Birmingham, Ala. group has developed a slide show presentation on the Klan and southern anti -Klan organizing. It is a good, and inexpensive organizing tool that they are making available to whoever can use it.

—Several communities have reported self- and community education groups that have developed in the last year.

—Church, labor and other progressive groups have made public their anger and refusal to put up with racist intimidation, often by letters to editors of local papers, or have purchased advertising space. One southern community used an old Klan tactic, and bought a billboard.

—TUFF (Those United to Fight Fascism) is a Columbus, Ohio coalition that does extensive education, has speakers they send to conferences, and does other community organizing. This is a solid, broad-based coalition. Despite their macho acronym, they are clear and non-rhetorical in their presentations, and seem to have given the different people in their community who have been or are potential targets a rallying point. Their analysis, which demonstrates the interconnectedness of racism, sexism and fascism, is thorough.

—The National Anti-Klan Network is planning an International Tribunal.

—In Durham, a coalition calling itself SOD (Save Our Democracy)—which consists of a wide range of groups from AFL-CIO to War Resisters League to the Lesbian/Gay Alliance Against Fascism—is planning a major conference on the New Right in the spring.

—Also in Durham, a Lesbian discussion group that has been working on racism is expanding into an action group.

WRL-SE has found it most important to remain flexible in terms of working in coalitions. Particularly around issues of racism and fascism, there are no hard and fast rules about coalition work. Besides recognizing the need for flexibility, we have followed two basic guidelines. We make our position about nonviolence very explicit, and work very hard at developing principles of unity that incorporate at least a stance of tactical nonviolence. It is not always clear cut though.

Two different occurrences at the Greensboro conference in early December pointed up the potential and the problems. The conference was heavily male dominated, with both panels of speakers (12 speakers) being all male. In the "women's workshop," after much rhetoric about which is worse, racism or sexism, this was discussed. When we quit being defensive with each other, four very strong resolutions were voted on and unanimously passed: for a women's caucus, for a women's conference on the New Right, and a demand for gender parity in all aspects of the coalition. The fourth resolution was perhaps most significant: a lesbian/gay caucus was called for. The most convincing speaker in favor of the caucus was a woman with the CWP who pointed out that red-baiting and gay-baiting were done by the same people—and we must make room in our coalitions for all people

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A Middle East Coalition is Born

By Paul Mayer

The stormy weather of the afternoon of November 24th seemed appropriate for the first public action of the newly formed Coalition for Justice and Peace in the Middle East. The Emergency Vigil at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations was in response to those other storm clouds gathering over the Middle East, filled with threats of World War III and nuclear confrontation.

The vigil had been called to challenge U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, a policy which the Coalition believes has obstructed the process leading to real peace and justice on that blood-soaked piece of earth. In spite of rain and wind over 100 hardy souls gathered in the chapel of the U.N. Church Center to hear Jewish, Palestinian, Black, peace and community leaders speak about the creation of a new movement and the launching of a new national debate on this issue.

In its first statement the Coalition insisted that "ultimately peace and security cannot be imposed by force of arms but can only come from justice." It also called on the U.S. "to help create conditions that will make it possible for both Palestinians and Israelis to live in justice and peace within secure and recognized borders."

Speakers such as Libby Frank of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom maintained that for the U.S. it is "not just a question of Israelis vs. Arabs. Behind it is cheap oil and anti-Sovietism." Samih Farsoun of the Palestine Congress of North America, while describing the day as "a historic moment," called the Camp David process "a trick to establish a reservation for Palestinians in the Middle East." To which Allan Solomonow of the Middle East Peace Project added that "there will be no peace in the Middle East without justice for Palestinians and no justice for Palestinians, unless there is peace for Israelis." He also called the U.S. "not the peacemaker, but the problem."

Dr. Helen Rodriquez of Roosevelt Hospital and Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA) pointed out that 85% of U.S. foreign aid—most of it military—goes to the Middle East. She said that the $2 billion destined for Israel, $1.6 billion for Egypt and $100 million for Jordan also had a destructive effect on the already inadequate health care system of New York City.

Along similar lines, Rabbi Arnold Wolf of Yale called for a halt to U.S. and U.S.S.R. arms sales to the Middle East. "Supoerpowers out of the Middle East" was his demand. But he also called "the PLO the legitimate organization of the Palestinian people." He said, "I don't agree with all aspects of the PLO, but we must learn to sit with them or there will be no peace."

Jim Haughton of Harlem Fightback echoed these sentiments: "There will be no peace unless the PLO is recognized." But he pointed out the hard work ahead because many of his progressive Jewish friends won't recognize the PLO; his progressive Black friends have the same attitude towards Israel.

Professor Edward Said of Columbia, a leading Palestinian scholar, stated that this coalition showed that the Middle East issue could no longer be kept on the back burner. Speaking of Palestinian rights he added, "I have never believed that you accomplish liberation or self-determination by driving people into the sea. I want everybody to stay and accomplish these together."

The vigil was chaired by Norma Becker, chair of the War Resisters League, and Dave Dellinger. The mood created by the day's wet and stormy weather was transformed by the inspiring music of Matt Jones, Judy Gorman-Jacobs, and Rev. Kirkpatrick.

Before the vigil an impressive ten-person delegation met with Ambassador Carl McCall and five aides at the U.S. Mission to convey its concerns to the Carter Administration. (A meeting with Reagan has also been requested.) The delegates included Ramsey Clark, Jack O'Dell (Co-editor, *Freedomways*), Henry Schwarzschild (American Civil Liberties Union and Contributing editor, *Sh'ma),* Robert Thabit (Executive V.P., National Association of Arab-Americans), Connie Hogarth (Westchester Peace Action Coalition), George Webber (President, New York Theological Seminary), this author, and most of the vigil participants.

Jack O'Dell called on the U.S. to "join the rest of the world" in recognizing the PLO and supporting a Palestinian state, realities which Ramsey Clark described as "inevitable." Henry Schwarzschild criticized "the persistent hiding of the genuine problem behind arguments of PLO terrorism," which he opposed.

The group also addressed itself to U.S. arms shipments, the involvement of U.S. equipment in the bombing of Southern Lebanon and the use of U.S. aid to support the Israeli settlement policy in the occupied territories with its violations of Palestinian human rights. They pointed out the related dangers of "the new interventionism" by way of the draft, Rapid Deployment Forces, and U.S. bases in the Middle East.

McCall and his staff seemed impressed by the delegation and said that they would share its views with Ambassador Donald McHenry and the Reagan transition team. April Glasby, a veteran Middle East specialist, commented that while she had heard these ideas from Israeli and Palestinian friends she had not heard them before from such a broad group of Americans.

The spirit of the day was summed up by Ramsey Clark when he observed that in the end "secure borders can only be in one place and that is in the heart of your neighbor." This is the spirit in which this new and struggling coalition will try to continue its difficult task. It offers a particular challenge to the U.S. peace movement to move beyond the generalities of nuclear disarmament and anti-militarism to addressing that troubled part of the world which is a primary candidate for igniting World War III.

Paul Mayer is the convener of the Religious Task Force of Mobilization for Survival.

WRL Position on Terrorism

We have received a number of letters from friends and members of WRL who felt our endorsement of the rally discussed in Paul Mayer's report reflected a one-sided approach to events in the Middle East—a critical position regarding Israeli air strikes into Lebanon, but a silence on the matter of PLO terror. WRL wants to reaffirm its absolute opposition to the policies of terrorism pursued both by the PLO and by the Israeli government. The statement that had gone out was a coalition statement which did not fully reflect the views of most of the endorsing organizations—and certainly failed to state WRL's position fully.

In addition, the choice of a photo on the flyer showing a young woman holding the sign "Justice Before Peace" implies something contrary to our historic position. One cannot put justice before peace, any more than one can put peace before justice. These two goals—peace and justice—must be pursued at the same time, each always evolving from the other. The lack of one always implies the lack of the other.

We do *not* retreat from, nor apologize for, our position that a settlement in the Middle East must include not only the recognition of the right of the State of Israel to exist within secure and peaceful borders, but also that the Palestine Liberation Organization must be recognized by Israel and must be a full party to peace negotiations. In the view of WRL, as expressed in statements over a period of time, this implies the same right of nationhood for the Palestinian people as for the Israelis.

Women's Pentagon Action

Grace Paley plants first tomb in cemetery
Photo by Dorothy Marder

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just how seriously the court was planning to deal with us.

I was in one of the first groups taken before the judge. Most of us pled no contest, two pled not guilty. The women who pled not guilty were released with $100 bail. Those who pled no contest were allowed to make statements to the court and were sentenced immediately: 10 days for first-time offenders, 30 days for second-timers. There were three different judges that were hearing our cases, and, as the evening wore on it became obvious that they were all giving out the same sentences, though they differed on the amount of bail set.

The initial reaction had been shock (30 days was the maximum sentence we could have been given), which later that evening turned to outrage, as 34 women who had been sentenced were shackled at the wrists, waist and ankles and told that they were being transported to the Federal Women's Prison in Alderson, West Virginia, 300 miles away. I was in that group of women, one of five who had been sentenced to 30 days. Merriel Fish, also from the WRL staff, was there too, sentenced to 10 days. We were loaded onto a bus in groups of five, a process that took many hours, and it wasn't until two o'clock in the morning that we finally drove off to Alderson. That same night, 43 women who had refused to post bail or who had been sentenced to 10 days were taken to the Arlington County Detention Center and another 15 went to the Alexandria County Jail. There had been a total of 140 arrests that day.

Those of us transported to Alderson finally arrived at 9:00 o'clock the next morning. A hallway had been set up with chairs in the Administration Building and we were taken there and our shackles and handcuffs were removed. The Warden came to greet us. "We don't play prison games, here" he said, "if you act like adults, we treat you like adults." We were then processed into the prison and assigned "cottages" to live in. (A "cottage" is a two story brick building which housed about 45 women.) We were spread out, within the population, a few to a cottage.

The reception we received that evening from the other inmates awed us. The prison seemed to be buzzing with the news of our arrival, and women came to greet us and help us settle into our new surroundings. Alderson is in a very rural part of West Virginia. Most of the women are from the DC area, or housed there from other states, or transferred from other prisons within the federal system. Because of the remoteness of the prison and difficulty of getting to it, many women never have visitors for the time they are there, and it is very easy to lose touch with the outside world. It's a very controlled environment, a police state (as all prisons are), and, as I was to find out over the 30 days, not much exciting happens. Thirty-four, spirited, political, some openly lesbian, women arriving at the same time, was quite an event.

The prison officials seemed to treat us with tolerance, allowing us full range of the prison experience. A special one-day orientation session was done for us, and the next day we were given work assignments. Most of us ended up raking leaves for a living. (One day we got creative with our leaves and raked them into a big peace sign on the front lawn. "That's disgusting," the guard who was assigned to us muttered, as he kicked them back into a nice, neat pile.)

The most important thing that many of us felt that we did with our time there were the relationships formed with the other women prisoners. We shared poetry, songs, anger, frustration and hours of talk about the injustice of the whole criminal justice system. Since our release, many of the women who ended up in jail because of their participation in the Women's Pentagon Action, have been meeting to talk about what we can do to help support women in prison.

Where the Women's Pentagon Action will go from here is still being discussed. The group was a very loose network of women, who came together to plan one action. Women came from the lesbian, feminist and peace movement and planned an event that spoke to all of our concerns. One of the most important things that happened was the working relationship set up among these women who were working on many different issues. Certainly those relationships and concerns did not end with the demonstration. We will all go back to our own groups and keep raising the connections between the issues and spread the spirit we felt of organizing together, *as women*. As a contribution to this process, the War Resisters League is sponsoring a conference on Feminism and Militarism to more deeply explore the issues raised at the Gathering (see enclosed brochure for information).

Susan Pines is on the staff of WRL and would like to take this space to thank all those WRL friends who sent their encouragement and support during her 30-day, unscheduled respite from the national office.

Remembering A. J. Muste

January 8, 1885 – February 11, 1967

In the fourteen years since A.J. Muste died, his unique contributions to the pacifist movement have been sorely missed: his political analyses which were rich with wisdom and prescience, and his personal courage which by example exhorted us to take more risks.

To continue his work and more fully develop his ideas, the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute was established. Over the past eight years, the Institute has helped fund dozens of important projects to promote disarmament and ban nuclear weapons (A.J. called nuclear war "politically irrational and morally an indefensible atrocity"), to further the understanding of nonviolence, and to secure for minority and other disadvantaged people economic equality and social justice. The Institute has also purchased the "peace pentagon" which houses the War Resisters League and seven other social change organizations. A fund raising drive to pay off the building's mortgage is now underway.

Future plans for the Institute include establishment of a peace and social change library at its headquarters. Hundreds of volumes—some quite rare—have already been contributed, and it is hoped that within the next year the library will be sufficiently stocked and organized to allow use by scholars and activists. A seminar series on such topics as feminism and nonviolence, young people and nonviolence, Marxism and the church, and the labor movement's role in progressive movements is also being organized. The Institute plans to publish the transcripts of these discussions and, when possible, videotape them, so groups and individuals around the country can benefit from the dialogue or the participants and use it as a springboard for their own discussions and actions.

Wendy C. Schwartz
Executive Director, AJMMI

Contributions to the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute are tax-deductible. They, and inquiries, can be sent to the Institute at 339 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012, 212-533-4335.

POLAND AND EL SALVADOR

By David McReynolds

The world has watched developments in Poland with close attention. There has been —and still is—fear of Soviet military action. Last year Soviet troops moved into Afghanistan. Twelve years ago the Warsaw Pact forces (including Polish troops) moved into Czechoslovakia. Will the Soviet Union allow a free labor movement to exist in Poland? Can the Soviets afford so dangerous an example within the East Bloc?

There is evidence that the Soviets have been under some pressure from the East Germans to bring Poland into line. At this point the Soviets remain restrained. These remarks, which link El Salvador and Poland, should begin with noting that for all the enthusiasm in the Western press for Polish events, the Polish workers have not called for the restoration of capitalism, and have not issued an appeal to their former bosses to return from exile and take charge of the factories. What they demand is workers' control—and workers' involvement in planning. These demands are certainly as unacceptable to the West as they may be to Moscow. After all, ask the workers at J.P. Stevens about their rights to strike and even to organize!

The demands of the Polish workers—that socialism be democratic, that unions be responsive to the workers and the union leadership selected by the workers—are demands I hope pacifists support. But in supporting those demands we must keep in mind how many American workers are either not able to organize unions, or belong to unions which are corrupt, undemocratic, or run in open collusion with the company. None of this should cause us to hesitate in urging, as strongly as possible, that the Soviet Union continue its present policy of *not* sending in troops. A military action by the Soviet Union would turn back the clock by ten or twenty years, making our work in the United States infinitely more difficult. I have written elsewhere that reaction in one nation strengthens reaction in another. If the Soviet move into Afghanistan helped bring Reagan to power here, Reagan's victory can also be seen by hardliners in Moscow as making it more necessary for them to prove themselves firm in dealing with internal dissent.

In order to cut through this endless cycle I want to urge that the West use the present crisis in East Europe to make a genuine breakthrough. I have little hope this advice will be taken, but simply because the ears of those in power may be closed to reason is not an excuse for us to cease speaking reasonably. The Warsaw Pact and the NATO Alliance were brought into existence at a specific time in history for reasons unique to that period. I do not now want to review that history in any detail—though I would note that NATO was organized first, and the Warsaw Pact was organized in response. (Conservatives would counter by saying the organization of NATO was necessary because of the danger of Soviet aggression). In the many years that followed this division of Europe into two military alliances, we have seen two things. First, the tensions in Europe itself have dropped sharply. I do not know of any significant body of opinion in Europe which expects the Soviet Union to march into Norway, Sweden, West Germany, etc. The disagreements about the forms of government and the ways to organize the economies of the two blocs remain quite sharp. Yet even these have blurred to some extent—the Hungary of today is not the Hungary of October, 1956, just as the Soviet Union of today is enormously different from the monolithic state of 1953. And the West is much less pathological than it was in 1953. The European capitals seem at times more worried about the irresponsible actions of Washington than of Moscow.

Is it not time to dismantle the two military alliances? Let me put it just that bluntly. What is the logic of these two military alliances? The only time the forces of the Warsaw Pact have been used is against a member nation - Czechoslovakia. And if we are really frank we know there has been open discussion about the possible use of NATO forces against internal political shifts or changes to the Far Left - i.e., possible NATO action was considered at the time of the overthrow of the old regime in Portugal.

The West can make three possible responses to the problems of Poland. It can try to exploit them, to disengage Poland from the Soviet Bloc. Certainly there are strong elements in the West which do seek just such a weakening of Soviet power. This course of action is exceptionally dangerous, and most likely to provoke Soviet intervention. Second, the West can do nothing at all—giving the Soviets no excuse for intervening, but also playing no active role to use the situation as the basis for a positive change in the European situation. Third, the West could recognize that now is the time to begin moving toward the demilitarization of Europe, the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from West Germany, and the opening of a frank discussion about the dismantling of the two military alliances.

The fact that this third course will not be pursued by the U.S. is one more reason for us to build an American movement which can take such political initiatives. Let's turn now and look at an issue which has not made the cover of *Time* and *Newsweek*—El Salvador. If, in Europe, the best the West can do is hope the Soviets don't move, in El Salvador the power is overwhelmingly in our hands. It is the *New York Times* of December 24, Christmas Eve, which spoke editorially of the 9,000 murdered—largely by right-wing death squads. It is El Salvador where Archbishop Romero was assassinated —and the same Pope who could appeal to the world for pray for Poland was singularly unresponsive. It is El Salvador where already the reactionary forces around Reagan insist the upheaval is Cuban in origin.

If the Soviet Union financed death squads, killed the Cardinal of Poland and kidnapped and murdered the leaders of Solidarity, there would be banner headlines in the *New York Times*. What is the double standard the West employs? Why do we give enormous attention to Czechoslovakia, where 50 people were killed in the Soviet intervention in 1968, and so little attention to the 9,000 killed in El Salvador? Whose guns do you think were used? Who do you think financed the death squads? As in El Salvador, so also in Honduras and Guatamala we see the U.S. supplying economic and military aid and technical advice and political support. This was true under Carter—it will be even more openly true under Reagan.

Nor is the tragedy confined to Central America, though that is the primary battleground. Bolivia saw a terrible military coup in recent months, which voided a free election. In the "old" Latin America, the coups were bloodless comic opera affairs, with one corrupt group leaving for exile when another corrupt group took power. The losers were always also survivers, because who knew when the winners might have to go into exile? But in Bolivia the "Chilean model" was followed—mass murder, the execution of trade unionists and intellectuals. Regardless of what happens in Poland, *our* job as Americans is to concentrate on what is happening in El Salvador, in Honduras, in Guatamala.

There will be a danger that our movement will divide over the issue of whether or not we support the violence of the guerrilla forces—when it should be uniting on the issue of how to cut off all military and economic aid from the U.S. to any military dictatorship, whether in South Korea or El Salvador, but particularly in El Salvador where American corporate and political influence is absolutely dominant. On the matter of Poland we can only hope or pray —but in the case of El Salvador the decisions made in Washington will determine whether there is peace or continued violence.

David McReynolds is a WRL national staff member.

Free Newsletter

For a free copy of the newsletter of the Resource Center for Nonviolence, which has as its theme this issue "Nonviolence and Community," send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: RCNV, POB 2324, Santa Cruz, CA 95063.

William Douthard Dies

William Douthard

William Douthard, born January 6, 1947, died Sunday, January 4, at the Albany Medical Center from a blood clot that lodged in his heart. He would have been 34 on January 6. William died at a time when we had much to expect from him. He had been a youth leader in his home town of Birmingham, Alabama, in the early 1960's, serving on the field staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He was beaten, tear gassed, and jailed repeatedly in that long struggle to end Jim Crow. During the Vietnam War he took an active part in the movement and became closely involved with WRL. At the time of his death he served on the WRL Executive Committee, the board of A. J. Muste Memorial Institute, and was associated with WIN magazine.

Let death not erase reality. It could not have been easy for William to give himself so fully to WRL, a predominately white organization. White pacifists do not realize we are insensitive to racism, but we are, in subtle, important ways, and William helped me and others to understand this. He himself had a remarkable ability to affirm all of what he was—a Black, a Southerner, an American—at the same time he was genuinely committed to integration and to racial nonviolence. Rarely angry and never bitter, he was filled with good humor and also shrewd insight. William—only strangers called him Bill—was more clearly in touch with a kind of "radical commonsense" than almost any radical I know. He grasped the link between economics and racism and tried steadily (and not always successfully) to help white pacifists deepen and broaden their understanding of nonviolence. Within meetings he could be stubborn and even abrasive—but was usually right. Outside of meetings, speaking informally, William spoke with quiet and genuine intensity about children, whom he loved categorically, and how politics had to be built with children in mind. He looked at the problems of society less as they oppressed him than as they endangered the children.

At the request of his family, friends were asked not to send flowers to the Memorial Services but to make out contributions to War Resisters League. The Executive Committee voted to set up a William Douthard Memorial Fund to receive contributions to be used "for the nonviolent resolution of economic and racial injustice." Checks should be made payable to WRL with a note indicating they are for this fund.

—David McReynolds

Organizing Against the Right-Wing *Continued from page 3*

under attack. CWP, according to literature it has recently put out, considers lesbianism, gayness, as well as feminism, revisionist and counter-revolutionary.

During a discussion about a counter-inaugural march, that is being called as a first action by this coalition, the question arose as to whether or not it would be called as a nonviolent march. WRL-SE will wait for just that question to be answered before we endorse the march, as well as questions about security, speakers, etc. But whether the march in January is called a nonviolent march or not, the coalition is certainly never going to agree on the question. Which leaves us in at best, an ambivalent position. What we will do, essentially, is wait and see.

But while we are waiting, there are some questions we are struggling with. Where do we fit in these coalitions? When we do fit in, how do we best raise consciousness about nonviolent resistance? What nonviolent tactics for protection and resistance can we offer? These questions only skim the surface. The question of how it is all connected—racism, sexism, war, peace, nonviolent revolution—are at the very least, as immediate.

Whether we are being struck down by Klansmen's bullets, or being intimidated by cross burnings and Nazis marching in the street; whether it is our homes or our abortion clinics being bombed; whether it is 34 women being chained and sent to a Federal prison for demonstrating against the Pentagon—while on the same day seven murderers were freed, because the people they murdered were an other named communist; whether or not we can overcome our divisiveness, we all have a common enemy—fascism. And it is rearing its ugly head in our communities and our lives with increasing, and dreadful frequency.

Protests at Sub Launch

On December 13, 1980, the USS Baltimore, a 688-class fast attack submarine, ready to be fitted with a payload of nuclear and non-nuclear torpedoes and depth charges, was launched at Electric Boat/General Dynamics in Groton, CT. While General Dynamics and the Navy hosted a "Christening" ceremony complete with free food, speakers and the crash of a champagne bottle, 50 people vigiled outside and leafletted those going into the celebration.

Two spontaneous acts of nonviolent resistance took place just as the ceremony was about to begin. Louis DeBenedette, a former Benedictine monk and Vietnam-era vet who had come up from Baltimore to protest the submarine being named after his home, blocked the entrance to the celebration. He was arrested and charged with criminal trespass and disorderly conduct.

Peter DeMott, a Vietnam veteran also from Baltimore, entered the shipyard with a ticket to the launch. Once inside, he spotted a General Dynamics van with the keys in it. He got inside, locked the doors and backed it up against an unfinished, unnamed Trident, ramming the rudder five or six times and denting it before security guards could break into the van and stop him. He is being charged with larceny, criminal trespass, two counts of criminal mischief, and reckless endangerment. The FBI is investigating lodging federal charges. Both Louis, who was released on personal recognizance at arraignment, and Peter, who is being held in jail on $5,000 bond, are to appear in court Jan. 8 for pre-trial hearings.

Peter and Louis, both members of the Atlantic Life Community, said their actions were to "protest first strike weapons, and the theft from the poor by the gross expenditures on these weapons of destruction." Acting in solidarity with their sisters and brothers in the Plowshare 8, they are calling themselves the Pruning Hook 2.

For more information on their actions and court proceedings contact: The Dorothy Day Community, PO Box 1093, Norwich, CT 06360.

—Joanne Sheehan

National Anti-Draft Conference

CARD (Committee Against Registration and the Draft) is sponsoring a national conference, February 13–16, 1981 at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. The conference will plan future actions and work on strategy for broadening the anti-draft movement. There will be time for informational workshops, skill sharing and regional coordination. If you are interested in attending, contact CARD, 201 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Room 111, Washington, DC 20002.

Draft Registration Begins Again
And So Does the Opposition

The onset of draft registration January 5–9 for men born in 1962, has generated demonstrations and sit-ins all over the country. Among the creative anti-draft actions, was the January 6, "Christmas Tree Blockade" of the main Post Office in Boston by members of the Boston Alliance Against the Draft. About 25 trees were used. The day before, 24 people were arrested for blocking the registration window. In some California post offices, locks to the entrances were jammed with wood or glue.

The Selective Service System predicts 95% of the 1.9 million men will register. This figure appears to be an exercise in wishful thinking, considering the 75% registration figure the Boston Globe (and others) estimate registered last July and the lack of publicity about registration this time. President-elect Reagan has yet to make clear whether he will continue registration, since he has been on record against it.

Special to WRL News

SAN FRANCISCO, January 6—Four women, including WRL/West staffmembers Helen Michalowski and Pat Sweeney, were arrested for throwing red paint on an Armed Forces recruiting office and handcuffing themselves to the entrance. The action, which shut down the office for two and a half hours, was an effort to link the "economic conscription" of military recruitment with the renewal of draft registration.

Meanwhile, a women's picket against the draft registration was set up at a local post office all day. The day before 10 were arrested in Berkeley for blocking a post office entrance.

DURHAM, NC, January 5—The WRL/Southeast office reported that WRLers in 12 cities all over the state and other southern cities such as Birmingham, Atlanta, Mobile, Knoxville, Miami, and St. Petersburg leafletted, picketed, or demonstrated at their local post offices. In Durham 50 people held a demonstration on Monday, followed by leafletting the rest of the week.

NEW YORK CITY, January 5—In subfreezing weather 500 people protesting draft registration picketed and rallied in front of the General Post Office. This was followed by a spirited march to the Armed Forces Recruiting Station in Times Square.

Among the speakers at the rally (MCed by WRL Chairwoman Norma Becker) was WRL staffmember David McReynolds. During the rally, a contingent broke off to block the entrance of the recruiting station. Among the 32 arrested were WRL staff members Ralph DiGia, Ed Hedemann, and Grace Hedemann.

Publicity for these events was excellent, including coverage by network television. The activities were organized by the Coalition Against Conscription (CAC), affiliated with the NYC Mobilization for Survival.

The CAC also organized the July 21 sit-in at the General Post Office draft registration window during the record 102°F weather. Though effective in slowing down registration, none were arrested. The march to the recruiting station this time was to make clear the link between the draft and the recruitment for the military.

Ed Hedemann, WRL staff member, under arrest during the sit-in at the Army Recruiting Station.
Photo by Lawrence Frank

In Memory of John Lennon

IMAGINE

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be one

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed nor hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one

WRL NEWS

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WRL is the U.S. branch of the War Resisters' International, a pacifist organization with affiliates in 18 countries.

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WRL News (from 1967 on) is available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

WRL Statement of Purpose

The War Resisters League affirms that war is a crime against humanity. We therefore are determined not to support any kind of war, international or civil, and to strive nonviolently for the removal of all the causes of war.

I support this statement and wish to enroll as a member of the War Resisters League.

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